

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1694

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, EEC

SUBJECT: EC/SWISS SCHEME FOR LAYING UP INLAND WATERWAY BARGES

REF: EC BRUSSELS 1430

1. WITH THE RESOLUTION OF THE TWO OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS DISCUSSED IN REFTEL, THE EEC AND SWITZERLAND HAVE COMPLETED THEIR NEGOTIATIONS ON AN AGREEMENT FOR THE LAYING-UP OF INLAND WATERWAY BARGES. THE AGREEMENT PROVIDES FOR A COMMON SYSTEM TO TAX BARGES USING THE RHINE AND ITS SUBSIDIARY CANALS. THE FIRST PROBLEM, A SITE FOR THE LAYING-UP FUND, WAS SETTLED BY CHOOSING DUISBURG IN THE FRG AS THE FUTURE HEADQUARTERS, AND BY AGREEING TO OPEN BRANCH OFFICES IN EACH STATE WHOSE TERRITORIES ARE COVERED BY THE AGREEMENT. THE SECOND PROBLEM, WHICH BODY WAS TO ASSUME THE SECRETARIAT FUNCTIONS, WAS RESOLVED BY GIVING THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PROVIDING THESE SERVICES TO THE EC COMMISSION.

2. THE FINAL AGREEMENT HAS BEEN TRANSMITTED TO EUR/RPE (ATTN: A. SENS). THE ARTICLES OF THE AGREEMENT DEALING WITH THE TREATMENT OF SHIP-BORNE BARGES ARE UNCHANGED FROM THOSE REPORTED IN REFTEL:

A. ARTICLE 7 (1) A - ONLY VESSELS UNDER 400 (300 DURING A TRANSITION PERIOD UP TO JANUARY 1, 1981) METRIC TONS WILL BE EXEMPTED FROM TAXATION.

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B. ARTICLE 7 (2) - FUTURE MODIFICATION OF THESE TONNAGE LIMITS IS POSSIBLE.

C. ARTICLE 10 - TAXATION RATES FOR SHIP-BORNE LIGHTERS WILL BE APPROXIMATELY THE SAME AS THOSE FOR BARGES IN GENERAL.

D. ARTICLE 13 (2) - THERE WILL BE NO TAXATION OF SHIP-BORNE BARGES UNLOADED FROM THE MOTHER SHIP. (HOWEVER, TRAVEL TO OR FROM PORTS OTHER THAN THAT IN WHICH THEY WERE UNLOADED FROM THE MOTHER SHIP WILL REQUIRE RATE PAYMENTS.)

3. THE EC COMMISSION HAS PROPOSED THAT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ADOPT THIS AGREEMENT UNDER A EC REGULATION. EC ADOPTION OF THE REGULATION AUTHORIZES CONCLUSION OF THE AGREEMENT AND WILL CONSTITUTE EC APPROVAL OF THE AGREEMENT. THE OTHER CONTRACTING PARTIES (BELGIUM, UNITED KINGDOM, FRANCE, FRG, LUXEMBOURG, NETHERLANDS, AND SWITZERLAND) MUST APPROVE OR RATIFY THE AGREEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR OWN CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES. OBSERVERS IN BRUSSELS ESTIMATE THE AGREEMENT CAN BE EXPECTED TO ENTER INTO FORCE IN JANUARY , 1978.HINTON

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